



Standards of Practice	
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<b>Effective Date: 3/27/2023</b> <b>Prior Version Date(s):</b>	Approved 9/1/22 – Josette Manning, Cabinet Secretary

## 1. Policy Purpose

This policy establishes standards of practice that guide employees in their work with children and families.

## 2. Scope

To fulfill its mission, the DSCYF system of care promotes positive outcomes and well-being of children and families through integrated, trauma-informed services that are individualized, strength-based, family-driven and youth-guided, and culturally responsive. Employees who work with children and families are responsible for utilizing a trauma-informed approach in their work with children and families. This includes:

- utilization of family team meetings and other collaboration strategies to ensure a coordinated approach across divisions and reduce redundancy and family stress,
- assessing and addressing multi-generational family needs, and
- connecting individuals with available family and youth peer supports.

DSCYF's enabling statute, Chapter 90 of Title 29 of Delaware Code, states that the General Assembly's intent and purpose of creating the department is:

“to achieve the consolidation of services to children, youth and their families within the jurisdiction of a single agency in order to avoid fragmentation and duplication of services and to increase accountability for the delivery and administration of these services; to plan, develop, and administer a comprehensive and unified service delivery system to abused, neglected, dependent, delinquent and mentally ill or emotionally disturbed children and youth within a continuum of care, which shall include the involvement of their family, within the least restrictive environment possible but consistent with the child's health and safety; to emphasize preventive services to children, youth and their families, in order to avoid the costs to the State of individual and family instability...”

## 3. Definitions

- **Best practice approaches:** for the purpose of this policy, best practice approaches are those identified as aligned with DSCYF core values and that support our system of care, including family team meetings, family and youth peer supports, multi-generational approach, and trauma-informed care.
- **Family Team Meetings (FTM):** a strength-based meeting that brings together family members, natural supports, and formal resources.

- **Family and Youth Peer Supports:** guidance, navigation, support, advocacy, and camaraderie provided informally or formally by a person with lived experience.
- **Multi-generational approach:** considers the needs of each family and household members both in relation to the child(ren) and as an individual. A multi-generational approach understands that when the well-being needs of caregivers and other household members are met, they are better able to meet the well-being needs of children and youth. Additionally, a multi-generational approach considers how current behaviors and family dynamics may be influenced by historical factors and cross generational patterns (example: learned parenting practices, substance use, etc.).
- **Trauma-Informed Care (TIC):** considers the ways in which current and historical exposure to positive/adverse experiences and traumatic events impact an individual's physical, mental, behavioral, social, and/or spiritual well-being. A trauma-informed approach includes responding to children and families with compassion and respect while actively working to reduce likelihood of re-traumatization due to engagement with our services.

## 4. Policy / Procedures

### **Collaboration and coordination**

- A. Collaborate with other workers on case planning decisions to ensure a coordinated approach and to reduce duplication of service provision.
- B. Advise other assigned workers of relevant changes in the child or family's situation or the case plan.
- C. If applicable, discuss and reach consensus on recommendations prior to a court appearance. Seek assistance from the supervisory level if consensus cannot be reached.
- D. Document collaboration activities (including meetings, calls, emails, and conversations, etc.) in FOCUS.

### **Family Team Meetings**

- A. Utilize formal family team meeting protocol as required by your division.
- B. Incorporate a team approach in situations that involve multiple divisions or agencies to support coordinated planning and service delivery and reduce unnecessary stress and burden on families.
- C. Support family driven and youth guided decision making in planning
- D. Incorporate family and community strengths and culture into assessment and planning

### **Multi-generational approach**

- A. Assess and consider the needs of caregivers and other household members to promote individual and family well-being.
- B. Refer caregivers and other household members to agencies or programs that can assist with identified needs.

- C. Consider internal and external funding opportunities that may be able to assist with addressing caregiver and other household member needs (Service Integration Fund, FIRST funding, division flex funds, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fund).

#### **Family and Youth Peer Supports**

- A. Be open to including individuals with lived experience in meetings and service planning discussions and valuing their perspective and support.
- B. Connect individuals to youth and caregiver supports available through department contracts and external partners.

### **5. Training**

Standards of practice will be emphasized during new employee training and through ongoing training curricula.

### **6. Legal Authority / Associated Regulations/Requirements**

[DSCYF enabling statute: Chapter 90 of Title 29](#)

### **7. Responsibility for this Policy**

Youth and family serving workers are responsible for following the requirements set forth in this policy. Employees who do not follow this policy may face discipline.

Supervisors of youth and family serving workers are responsible for monitoring and evaluating staff compliance with this policy on an ongoing basis and during performance reviews, as well as coaching their direct reports on ways to improve interdivisional collaboration and incorporate best practice approaches into their work. Supervisors who do not follow or enforce this policy may face discipline.

The Office of Case Management is responsible for performing case reviews and making recommendations to improve compliance with this policy.